

DAVID DON'S "PRODROMUS FLORAE NEPALENSIS"

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THE "Prodromus Florae Nepalensis, sive Enumeratio Vegetabilium quas in Itinere per Nepaliam proprie dictam et Regiones conterminas, ann. 1802–1803, detexit atque legit D. D. Franciscus Hamilton, (olim Buchanan)" by David Don (1799–1841) is an unpretentious little book of considerable importance to students of the Himalayan flora,¹ for many species were first described in its 256 pages. It evidently took a long time to prepare. A letter to Wallich from Buchanan-Hamilton dated 16 October 1821 states that "A Mr. Don, however, who lives with Mr. Lambert, to whom I gave duplicates of the collection presented to Sir J. E. Smith, is engaged in publishing an account of them together with those which you have sent, and I believe he has both abilities and industry to produce a very valuable work." (Ann. Roy. Bot. Gard. Calcutta 10[2]: xxxi. 1905). Don's preface is dated "Kalendis Octobris, Ann. 1824" and in Trans. Linn. Soc. London 18: 518 (1841) he states that it was "completed and some copies of the work distributed before the close of 1824." As the title-page is dated "MDCCCXXV," it was evidently not intended or expected to be available to the public until 1825, and the Monthly Literary Advertiser, no. 240, p. 28, 32 (9 April 1825) lists it among the new books published in March 1825. A copy once belonging to John Lindley (1799–1865), who published, in the Botanical Register 11: sub *t.* 872 (1 March 1825), a scathing review of Don's work, is in the Lindley Library of the Royal Horticultural Society. On the title-page Lindley has written "Published 1 Feb. 1825," and there seems no reason to question this statement. Hence *February 1825 may be taken as the date of publication of D. Don's "Prodromus Florae Nepalensis."* The names published in it thus have priority over names published in A. P. DeCandolle's "Prodromus Systematis Regni Vegetabilis" vol. 2 (Nov. 1825; cf. Stearn in Candollea 8: 1–4. 1939).

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¹For dates of publication of another important work on Himalayan plants, Royle's "Illustrations of the Botany . . . of the Himalayan Mountains" (1833–1840), see Sprague in Kew Bull. 1933: 378–390 (1933), Stearn in Jour. Arnold Arb. 24: 484–487 (1943).